

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 1**  
**INCIDENT NO. 2004-035**  
**DATE: August 20, 2004 Time 7:00 p.m.**

**TO:** Governor John Hoeven  
State Capitol  
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** Statewide Fires – Drought conditions in areas of high fuel content have led to fires ignited by various sources including thunderstorms, agricultural operations and human error. Throughout the spring and summer, the State Operations Center has received several reports of fires.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** One firefighter died of cardiac arrest and another injured a knee in response to a 350-acre fire in Morton County on August 2, 2004.
3. **DAMAGES:** The following summarizes recent fire activity in Billings County.

**Whitetail Fire:** On August 19, 2004, a multi-jurisdictional fire, approximately 500 acres, erupted in juniper trees and grass on state and federal lands two miles southwest of the Magpie Campground Fire. On August 20, 2004, a fire line was established on the north, east and west sides of the fire, it continues to burn on the south side.

**Magpie Camp Fire:** Beginning on August 15, 2004, a fire in the Badlands at the Magpie Campground near the Maah Daah Hey bike trail burned approximately 1,883 acres. Included were 1,291 acres of Dakota Prairie Grasslands, 572 acres of state lands, and 20 acres of private land. The fire is 100 percent contained and cool on three sides. Extensive burnout operations were conducted on August 17, 2004, to remove pockets of unburned fuel. The fire was near oil production facilities and one ranch.

**Mike's Creek Fire:** On July 27, 2004, a 300-acre fire, 25 miles north of Medora, started close to an area referred to as Mike's Creek. It contained heavy fuel consisting of juniper bushes and trees. A multi-jurisdictional response extinguished the fire on July 29, 2004.

4. **RESOURCES:**

**LOCAL:** Responders included the Billings County Fire Department, Billings County Sheriff's Department, Billings County Emergency Management, Belfield Fire Department, South Heart Fire Department, Fairfield Fire Department, Golva Fire Department, Fort Yates Strike Crews, and the Fryburg Fire Department.

STATE: The N.D. Game and Fish Department supplied firefighting support. Representatives from the Office of the Governor, N.D. Forest Service, Division of Emergency Management/State Radio, State Fire Marshal's Office and State Land Department are monitoring the situation.

FEDERAL: The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) have provided firefighting and equipment support. The National Weather Service (NWS) is monitoring weather conditions.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Volunteer fire departments, local residents and ranchers are supporting response efforts.
6. MAJOR ACTIONS: On August 20, 2004, Governor John Hoeven approved a recommendation by the North Dakota Forest Service, the State Fire Marshal and the N.D. Division of Emergency Management to deploy a Type II firefighting team for the Whitetail and Magpie fires. This Type II team, which will be dispatched from Montana, is a fire management team consisting of 20 people. An Incident Commander (IC), Functional Commanders and safety officers will manage the fire. Local resources are being depleted and responders are becoming fatigued

**Whitetail Fire:** Two strike teams of engines, one Type II helicopter, three single engine air tankers (SEAT), three smoke jumpers, one Safety Officer, one Type III Incident Commander and one water tender were requested through the North Dakota Dispatch Center in Upham, N.D.

**Magpie Camp Fire:** The Billings County Fire Department, eight U.S. Forest Service engines, 15 Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) engines, 11 smoke jumpers and three small engine air tankers (SEAT) were on scene. One Type II helicopter was utilized. On August 18, 2004, the smoke jumpers and the Fort Yates hand crews were demobilized and the fire area had been turned over to local jurisdictional authorities. Remaining on site were six engines, two from the National Park Service, three from Dakota Prairie Grasslands, and one from the N.D. Forest Service. Plans call for patrolling and mop up operations through Saturday, August 21, 2004.

**Mike's Creek Fire:** On-scene resources included Dakota Prairie Grassland (DPG) initial attack engines and crews, a DPG Type IV IC, three engines from the National Park Service (NPS), four Billings County grass units, three Billings County water tenders, one Billings County dozer, one Billings County motor grader, and the Billings County incident command post trailer. Additional resources, ordered through North Dakota Dispatch Center, included two Type II hand crews, three single engine air tankers (SEATS), one light helicopter, 11 smokejumpers, and 15 personnel from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: Fire officials have requested a Type II Team to manage firefighting activities and resources. The Type II Team is expected to arrive on scene by August 21, 2004.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: Private firefighting contractors and Montana Rural Fire Departments, alerted by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, are on scene.

9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director